

# This Week in Agriculture

## July 24-30 2005

## Weed Awareness Campaign targets purple 'Marsh Monster'

**T**hat purple flower now in bloom along Idaho ditches, rivers, wetlands and ponds may look pretty to you, but before you pluck off a handful for your sweetie, think again: The Idaho Weed Awareness campaign warns that what you're seeing is actually a weed dubbed the "Marsh Monster" in some places.

"It is not an ornamental flower but an invasive noxious weed called Purple loosestrife," said Roger Batt, campaign coordinator. "Purple loosestrife already has taken over some 35,000 acres of land in Idaho, more than 4 million acres across the country, and is continuing to spread."

The Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign participates in the Idaho State Department of Agriculture's Cost Share Program, which provides funding for education, weed awareness and eradication throughout the state.

Purple loosestrife is an insidious wetland weed that came to the eastern United States about 200 years ago from Eurasia. The noxious weed can take

over wetlands by slowing water flow, which increases silt deposits and makes the stream channel smaller, impacting native plants, fish and wildlife.

What can I do? See  
Page 2 for more

Please see Monster  
Page 2



Pretty? Nope. Purple loosestrife is a noxious weed, and it's a major threat to Idaho's future. The Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign is trying to get the word out about Purple loosestrife.

Governor Dirk Kempthorne has appointed Gordon Gallup of Ririe to the Idaho Wheat Commission.

Gallup will represent the wheat producers of District Four, which includes Custer, Butte, Jefferson, Bingham, Bonneville, Madison, Teton, Fremont and Clark Counties.

Gallup replaces Boyd Schwieder of Idaho Falls, who recently completed serving 10-

years on the commission.

Gallup, who has been operating the family farm since 1975, grows wheat, barley and alfalfa on a 3000-acre farm in Ririe.

Gallup has been actively involved in the Idaho Grain Producers Association (IGPA) for many years. He recently completed his term on the IGPA board of directors and served from 2003-2004 as the chairman of the Conservation



Committee for the National Association of Wheat Growers.

He serves on the Board of Directors of the Ririe Grain and Feed Co-Op and is the District supervisor for the Eastside Soil and Water Conservation District in Bonneville County.

## Monster (continued from page 1)

Purple loosestrife can clog ditches and irrigation canals.

The weed grows up to six feet tall and spreads quickly in wet soils. Each plant is capable of producing hundreds of thousands of seeds.

"What is alarming about Purple loosestrife is that it can be purchased illegally on the Internet and then planted in gardens and wetland areas. The Idaho Noxious Weed law prohibits the purchasing and planting of noxious weeds in Idaho, so if you know of someone planting Purple loosestrife, ask them to stop spreading this noxious weed," Batt added.

Purple loosestrife is just one of about three dozen noxious weeds that have gained a foothold in Idaho. These destructive non-native, invasive plants choke out native vegetation, starving wildlife out of their food supply and render once valuable land useless. Statewide, invasive weeds cause more than \$300 million in direct damages to Idaho's economy.

"County weed superintendents are asking for access to property from owners who have infestations of Purple loosestrife to introduce a bio-control agent called *Galerucella*, an insect that literally devours the plant", said Canyon County Weed Superintendent Jim Martell.

If you spot a plant you think might be Purple loosestrife, pinch off a piece containing a bloom and take it to your local county weed superintendent. You'll find it located under County Government in the phone book. Be sure to note exactly where you found the plant so the county weed superintendent can locate the infestation.

### Workshop slated

An information workshop and field day on the biological control of Purple Loosestrife will be held at 9 a.m. Thursday, July 21 at the Idaho State

Department of Agriculture;

Lower 1 and Lower 2

2270 Old Penitentiary Road  
Boise, Idaho

To register for the workshop, call Bryan Dallolio at (208) 888-2316.

Pesticide Re-certification Credits will be available.

The workshop is sponsored by the University of Idaho, the Nez Perce Biological Control Center, the Inland Empire Cooperative Weed Management Area, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

For more information on Purple loosestrife and other noxious weeds go to the Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign at <http://www.idahoweedawareness.org> or to report noxious weeds in your

The public will be kept informed of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture's smoke management activities in northern Idaho, and will have access to a toll-free hotline that can be used to voice complaints, ISDA Director Pat Takasugi announced today.

"It is our goal to work closely with the growers, our on-the-ground smoke management coordinators and the media to get the word out about burn conditions," Takasugi said.

"We're taking a page from the books of other successful burn programs, such as in Oregon's Willamette Valley, improving on them, and then adapting them for northern Idaho conditions."

Last year in Oregon, growers burned nearly 50,000 acres of bluegrass and other grass seed residues in the Willamette Valley. Washington state burned more than 138,000 of cereal grain acres in 2004.

ISDA has contracts with radio, television and newspaper outlets to get the word out about possible planned burns. Each afternoon, the department, working with its specialists in northern Idaho, decides whether conditions are appropriate to conduct a burn. Once the decision is made, the information is distributed to the news media, our smoke management website and burn complaint hotline. The next morning, weather information is re-evaluated and burn decision information is distributed.

Takasugi emphasized that the department will not allow burning if the afternoon forecasting shows conditions are not expected to be favorable the next day.

"Even if conditions were to improve, we will not do it, because the public depends on us to release accurate, consistent information. We want to do everything we can to be sure there are no surprises," Takasugi said.



**Director  
Takasugi**

ISDA's smoke management program applies to agricultural fields. Other burns, such as forest management activities and forestry debris burns, are not conducted by ISDA and are not regulated by the department.

Last week, Takasugi determined that there are no economically viable alternatives to field burning.

As a result of the determination, required by law, growers will be allowed to burn their fields this year in order to boost yields, and control disease, weeds and insects.

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture's toll-free burn hotline number is **1-800-345-1007**.

Burn condition information is also available at our Website, <http://www.idahoag.us>.

Area news organizations that publicize burn information daily are the Lewiston Tribune, KXLY-TV Ch. 4 in Spokane, KPND 95.3 FM, KSPT 1400 AM, KIBR 102.5/102.1 FM, KBFJ 1450 AM, KICR 102.3 FM.

## 'Famous Potatoes Day' to yield new information for potato growers

University of Idaho agricultural scientists will describe the most recent findings of their research and extension trials at the "Famous Potatoes Field Day."

The event is scheduled for July 26 near Blackfoot, announced UI potato cropping systems specialist Bryan Hopkins.

Other items on the agenda for the event include:

- A release of the results from the university's four-year best management practices

trial with grower cooperators, along with a list of those practices.

- Potato insect and disease management and product effectiveness.
- Use of drip irrigation to improve yields and tuber quality.
- Comparison of planting beds and rows.
- Demonstration of devices that measure soil moisture and sense crop nutrient status.
- Demonstration of precision

agriculture and agronomic geospatial technologies.

The field day runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and will be held about seven miles southwest of Blackfoot, across from the Riverton LDS Church.

To reach the site, turn west off I-15 at exit 89, then right on Riverton Road. Travel north about half a mile, then west for three miles.

For more information, call Bryan Hopkins at (208) 529-8375.



## Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Week July 17-23, 2005

Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne and Oregon Governor

Ted Kulongoski signed proclamations designating July 17 through 23, 2005 as Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Week in their respective states. In conjunction with Onion Week, the National Onion Association (NOA) will hold its Summer Convention in Ontario, Oregon, and the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee will kick-off a new marketing initiative designed to increase local and national exposure for onions grown in the region.

The nation's onion growers will participate in the NOA Summer Convention, July 20-23, 2005, at the Holiday Inn in Ontario, Oregon. Important industry issues will be addressed and the group will tour area onion fields and packing sheds.

"Onion Week and the NOA Summer Convention present a perfect opportunity to raise awareness about Idaho-Eastern Oregon onions," said Sherise Jones, Marketing Director for the Idaho Eastern Oregon Onion Committee. "The onion industry is vital to the economies of Oregon and Idaho." "It's important we communicate the special characteristics about the region and the onions that are grown here."

The Idaho-Eastern Oregon onion growing region is the largest in the nation, with 21,000 acres

planted each year which produces 22,000 truckloads of onions that are shipped across the country. The shipments constitute about 35 percent of all onions consumed in America between August and March.

Idaho-Eastern Oregon onions meet the highest standard of size, shape and quality. As regulated by Federal Marketing Order #958, packing and shipping processes are monitored by federal and state inspectors.

Each onion load is inspected and graded to meet strict specifications.

### Did You Know?

*During the Middle Ages, onions were worth so much that they were used to pay rent and were given as wedding gifts.*

During Onion Week, equipped with an abundance of impressive facts, the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee will launch their new marketing program with a fresh and informative website:  
<http://www.bigonions.com>



"The website is only the start," Jones said. "We are excited to spread the word about our great onions."

Cool Onion Facts!

*Ancient Egyptian leaders took an oath of office with their right hand on an onion.*

## Organic Green Bean Seed Production field day set for Shoshone

The first "Organic Green Bean Seed Production Field Day" will be held at Bryant Ranch in Shoshone, Idaho on July 27.

The event is sponsored by Organic Seed Alliance (OSA) with cooperation from University of Idaho, Oregon State University (OSU), Washington State University and participating producers Fred Brossy, Donald Tipping and Scott Chichester.

The event will take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and speakers will cover a variety of topics, including:

- Commercial seed production - initial cultivation, planting, and maintenance;
- Stock seed production;

- Varietal evaluation, focusing on varieties screened for organics;
- Breeding and varietal maintenance including a history of green bean genetics, genetic resistance to disease, off-types, and rouging;
- An overview of the history and services of the Idaho Foundation Seed Program.

The presenters will be Fred Brossy (Bryant Ranch), Mike Heath (M&M Heath Farms), Jim Myers (OSU), Kathy Stewart

The field days are provided free of charge.

There is a \$10 fee for lunch. Pre-registration is required as class size is limited. For more information about this project or to register for a field day, please contact Organic Seed Alliance at (360) 385-7192 or [info@seedalliance.org](mailto:info@seedalliance.org) or visit the OSA webpage at <http://www.seedalliance.org>.

Williams (Idaho Foundation Seed Program), John Navazio and Woody Deryckx (OSA).

There will be a second field day in September with information on gauging seed maturity, harvest, cleaning, and conditioning.

## Funding once again available for sage grouse program

Funding is once again available for sage grouse conservation programs across Idaho, the State Department of Fish and Game and the Governor's Office of Species Conservation have announced.

Last year, the agency allocated more than \$300,000 to sage-grouse conservation projects across the state.

At least \$300,000 will again be available this year.

The deadline to submit 2005 grant applications is August 31. A review of grant applications will be conducted during September and October.

Grants will be announced November 2005.

Projects should focus on achieving on-the-ground results.

Projects that leverage matching funds are particularly attractive.

Private land projects are especially important since funding is already available for federal and state land projects.

Applications should be sent to:

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Sage Grouse Proposal

c/o Tom Hemkar

600 S. Walnut, P.O. Box 25

Boise, Idaho 83707

A small grant fund also provides money for time-sensitive

projects of less than \$5,000, and a \$100,000 fund is available for projects that directly improve sage grouse habitat. Applications for those two special funds are accepted any time.

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